

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Original) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine, comprising:

an exhaust gas purifying catalyst including

a monolithic substrate,

a HC adsorbing layer for adsorbing hydrocarbons (HC), said HC absorbing layer being formed on said monolithic substrate, and

a catalytic layer for producing hydrogen (H₂) and reducing NO_x, said catalytic layer functioning to produce hydrogen (H₂) from at least one of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide (CO) and to reduce nitrogen oxides (NO_x) with the produced hydrogen and at least one of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide in exhaust gas, said catalytic layer being formed on said HC adsorbing layer; and

a device for controlling combustion in the engine to produce exhaust gas, to be brought into contact with said catalytic layer, having a composition meeting a relation [(a concentration of hydrogen / a concentration of total reducing components) \geq 0.3].

16. (Cancelled)

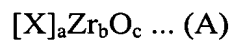
17. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said exhaust gas purifying catalyst is for purifying exhaust gas discharged from an internal combustion engine, wherein said HC adsorbing layer contains zeolite and functions to adsorb hydrocarbons during a cold operation of the engine and to release adsorbed hydrocarbons during a warm-up operation of the engine, wherein said catalytic layer functions to produce hydrogen from hydrocarbons released from said

HC adsorbing layer and from at least one of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide discharged from the engine after the warm-up operation and to reduce NO_x with produced hydrogen and at least hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide in exhaust gas.

18. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said catalytic layer contains a H₂ producing catalyst component for functioning to produce hydrocarbons, and a NO_x reducing catalyst component for functioning to reduce nitrogen oxides, said H₂ producing catalyst component being disposed on said HC adsorbing layer and including a HC reforming catalyst component functioning to reform hydrocarbons so as to produce hydrogen and a CO reforming catalyst component functioning to make steam reforming of carbon monoxide, said HC reforming catalyst component containing cerium oxide carrying palladium, said CO reforming catalyst component containing zirconium oxide carrying rhodium.

19. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 18, wherein said catalytic layer further includes an upstream layer formed at an upstream section of said exhaust gas purifying catalyst, said upstream section being located upstream of said HC reforming catalyst component and said CO reforming catalyst component relative to flow direction of exhaust gas, said upstream layer containing alumina carrying palladium.

20. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 18, wherein said zirconium oxide carrying rhodium contains alkaline earth and has a composition represented by the following formula (A):



where X is an alkaline earth metal selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium and barium; a and b are ratios of atoms of elements; and c is a number of oxygen atoms required for satisfying valences of X and Zr, in which a is within a range of from 0.01 to 0.5, b is within a range of from 0.5 to 0.99, and a+b = 1.0.

21. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 19, wherein said NO_x reducing catalyst component functioning to reduce nitrogen oxides is contained in at least one of said HC adsorbing layer, said

HC reforming catalyst component, said CO reforming catalyst component and said upstream layer containing alumina carrying palladium.

22. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 19, wherein said NO_x reducing catalyst component functioning to reduce nitrogen oxides is contained in at least one of said HC adsorbing layer, said HC reforming catalyst component, said CO reforming catalyst component and said upstream layer containing alumina carrying palladium, said NO_x reducing catalyst component containing at least one selected from the group consisting of palladium, platinum, rhodium, alumina, alkali metal and alkaline earth metal.

23. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said zeolite contains H-type β -zeolite having a Si/2Al ratio ranging from 10 to 500.

24. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said zeolite contains H-type β -zeolite and at least one of MFI, Y-type zeolite, USY-type zeolite and mordenite.

25. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said zeolite contains at least one selected from the group consisting of palladium, magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, silver, yttrium, lanthanum, cerium, neodymium, phosphorus, boron and zirconium.

26. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 19, wherein said NO_x reducing catalyst component functioning to reduce nitrogen oxides is contained in at least one of said HC adsorbing layer, said HC reforming catalyst component, said CO reforming catalyst component and said upstream layer containing alumina carrying palladium, said NO_x reducing catalyst component containing at least one selected from the group consisting of alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, said NO_x reducing catalyst component containing at least one selected from the group consisting of potassium, cesium, magnesium, calcium and barium.

27. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 18, wherein said HC reforming catalyst component and

said CO reforming catalyst are mixed to form a single layer disposed on said monolithic substrate on said HC adsorbing layer.

28. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 18, wherein said HC reforming catalyst component forms a first layer disposed on said monolithic substrate, and said CO reforming catalyst forms a second layer, said second layer being formed on said first layer.

29. (Previously Presented) An exhaust gas purifying system for an internal combustion engine as claimed in Claim 18, wherein said HC reforming catalyst component forms a first layer disposed on said monolithic substrate, and said CO reforming catalyst component forms a second layer, said second layer being formed downstream of said first layer relative to flow direction of exhaust gas.

30. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

providing an exhaust gas purifying catalyst, the exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising:

a monolithic substrate;

a HC adsorbing layer for adsorbing hydrocarbons (HC), said HC adsorbing layer containing zeolite and being formed on said monolithic substrate; and

a catalytic layer for producing hydrogen (H₂) and reducing NO_x, said catalytic layer functioning to produce hydrogen (H₂) from at least one of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide (CO) and to reduce nitrogen oxides (NO_x) with the produced hydrogen and at least one of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide in exhaust gas, said catalytic layer being formed on said HC adsorbing layer; and

supplying exhaust gas to contact said catalytic layer, the exhaust gas having a composition meeting a relation $[(\text{a concentration of hydrogen} / \text{a concentration of total reducing components}) \geq 0.3]$.